SERVING THE TOTAL FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY

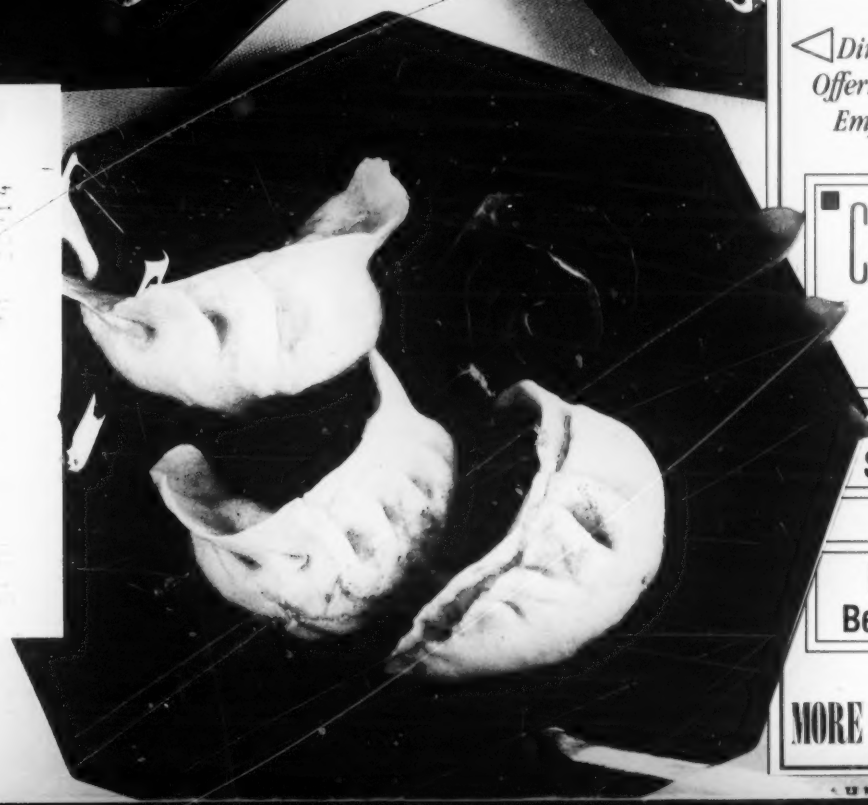
AUGUST 8, 1990

RESTAURANTS & INSTITUTIONS

AN OPEN LETTER

To Managers From Hourly Workers

Dim Sum, A Bright Offering At Levi Strauss Employee Cafeteria



CALIFORNIA SPECIAL

Shakeout In San Francisco

AND

Menu Ideas: Best Of The Bay

MORE INSIDE! SEE PAGE 2

UNDRC PUBLICATION

AUG. 8, 1990

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VOL. 100 NO. 20

28 R&I EXCLUSIVE: AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE WORK FORCE

Hourly workers are the backbone of the foodservice industry. At the door and standing guard over a company's image are the hosts and hostesses, many without adequate public relations training. In the heat of the kitchen, with responsibilities for preparing the industry's foods, is the cooking brigade. Fast-food workers suffer scheduling nightmares, and the silent army of busers and dishwashers join in a chorus of what hourly workers think about their jobs. We report their attitudes verbatim.

58 CALIFORNIA SPECIAL: SHAKEOUT IN SAN FRANCISCO

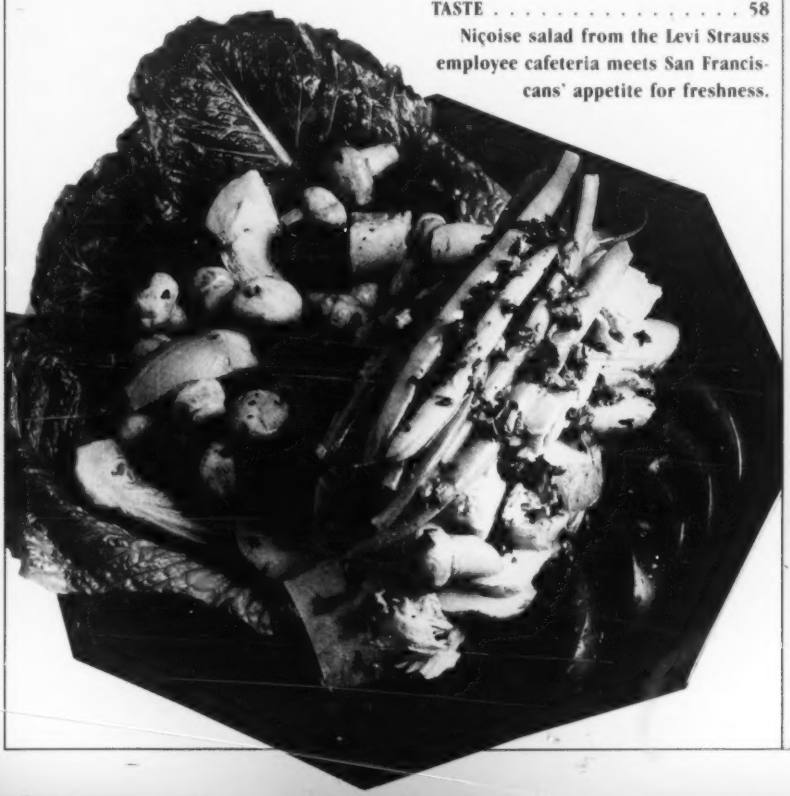
San Francisco, rich with a long tradition of fine foodservice and hospitality, boasts 3,400 restaurants—one for every 508 residents. (The national average is one for every 856 residents.) But that very abundance of restaurants, along with plummeting tourism and convention business, cocooning baby boomers and street crime add up to challenges for restaurant operators in the beautiful city by the bay.

78 BEST OF THE BAY MENU IDEAS AND RECIPES

To stay competitive, astute restaurateurs in the San Francisco area are scaling down restaurant size, menu prices and even hours of operation. Despite more spartan settings, however, San Franciscans still expect fresh, lively food and culinary adventure.

93 PRODUCTS ON PARADE AND AT ATTENTION

R&I salutes new and proven products and presents tested recipes and merchandising aids, which are available for the asking by way of the Reader Service Card at the back of the issue.



TASTE 58
Niçoise salad from the Levi Strauss employee cafeteria meets San Franciscans' appetite for freshness.

Hourlies give their side.
R&I EXCLUSIVE . . . 28

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Letters from the Front Line

Enrique is a dishwasher in a fine-dining restaurant. He earns about $3.50 hour, shares an apartment with his two brothers, and sends most of his paycheck back home to his family in Guatemala. He stands seven hours a day in the dish room, feeding expensive tableware into a machine or scrubbing pots, grills and cutting boards until they are as clean as they day they came into the kitchen. The boss, who also worked the dish detail when he started in the restaurant, will have it no other way.

Enrique likes his job. The fact that he has one, can pay his bills and send money home, gives him self-respect. He has seen one of his brothers go on to being a back waiter, with the promise of moving to the front. This is progress, opportunity. It makes Enrique feel he was right to come to America. He feels foodservice has put him on the right track.

For all the managers and executives in foodservice operations, Enrique is a public relations model, someone who is supposed to represent all hourly workers. The truth is, he's a minority. Some of the dishwashers, waiters, busers and line cooks are basically happy and fulfilled, but the large majority still want more. Allowing for the chronic complainers who are never satisfied, average hourly workers believe that their jobs offer, as the Spanish-speaking among them say, "*mucho trabajo, poco dinero.*"

That's OK. The foodservice industry is not Sunnybrook farm. Owners and executives are not obligated to provide ideal working conditions, salaries and benefit packages. Conversely, if they feel hourly workers are a cheap commodity to be handled as such, they are in error and perpetuate the perception that the industry feeds off unrewarded sweat and toil.

Too often, managers and executives don't want to hear what hourlies really think. To help them listen, and respond, *R&I*'s editors went into the kitchens and back rooms of the industry to get a fix on what hourlies want most. We ask all managers to read "Open Letter" on page 28, then do something about the gaps that exist, so more hourlies decide to stay, at a time when we sorely need them.

Mike Bartlett

THE HILL

NRA TASK FORCE TACKLES HEALTH BENEFITS ISSUE

The National Restaurant Association's Mandated Health Benefits Task Force has taken the offensive in developing incentive-based legislation that would act as an alternative to proposals that require employers to provide health insurance.

The association and Task Force Chairman Biff Naylor are working with Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) to get a bill into the Congressional hopper before the nation's health-care crisis worsens and legislation introduced by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) picks up steam.

One of the NRA's suggestions is a provision that would make it easier for small businesses to form multi-employer trusts. As a group, small businesses can centralize administration and gain a more stable risk rating. Programs like these are working successfully in Wisconsin and California.

The association also would like the government to allow a 100% tax deduction for any business that provides health insurance, especially small independent operators and not just corporations. According to the Employee Benefits Research Institute, 22.4% of the self-employed do not have health insurance. The current 25% deduction provides little incentive for self-employed businesspeople to provide coverage for themselves or their employees, according to Naylor, a California restaurateur.

The NRA also would like to find ways to eliminate unnecessary medical procedures and revise malpractice laws to reduce liability insurance costs for physicians. The NRA also questions underwriting practices and the right of insurers to deny coverage to certain small businesses and occupations that are arbitrarily deemed risky.

Naylor says in the long run, all the recommended solutions will be realized.

—Jeff Weinstein

Sen. Edward Kennedy, sponsor of the mandated health benefits bill.

VITAL STATISTICS

□ 45% of all full-service patrons pay for their meal with a credit card when dining out.

□ Nearly 65% of the 35 billion pounds of potatoes grown in the U.S. each year are made into potato chips, dehydrated instant mixes and frozen items such as french fries.

□ California restaurants generated median sales of $6,344 per seat in 1988, 52% higher than the U.S. median.

□ Nearly 60% of American executives believe that employees who don't give two weeks' notice might hurt their career opportunity.

□ The average American eats a hot dog once every six days.

□ *Yellow Pages* listings for yogurt shops increased 45.8% during 1989.

□ Employee productivity in eating and drinking places increased 1.3% annually from 1985 to 1988.

□ On a given day, 40% of adults do not eat fruit, 20% do not eat vegetables and 80% do not eat any high-fiber cereals or whole-grain breads.

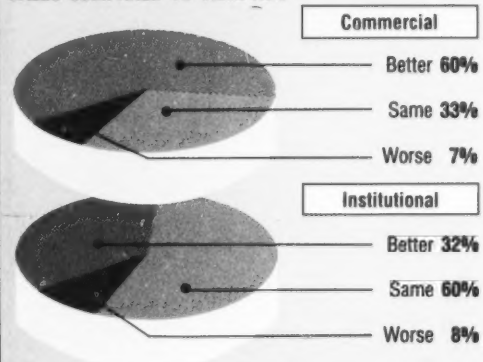
For sources, see Action Express on page 110.

R&I DATA

CONFIDENCE IS UP

Last year at this time, only 53% of commercial operators termed sales as better than the previous year. Also, when surveyed in June, operators reported traffic counts up 47%, compared to a year earlier.

SALES COMPARED TO YEAR AGO



TRAFFIC COUNTS COMPARED TO YEAR AGO

	Commercial	Institutional
Up more than 10%	13.3%	10.0%
Up 1% to 10%	46.7	17.5
No change	31.7	55.0
Down 1% to 10%	6.7	12.5
Down more than 10%	1.7	5.0
Average:	**+3.8**	**+1.0**

Restaurants & Institutions Bureau of Foodservice Research.